

*THE NATURE OF
OSIRIS*

BOOK III

bands of married and unmarried men respectively. Finally, he is stripped of the skins and thrown into the river.¹

Further, we read of a Norwegian king, Halfdan the

Black, whose body was cut up and buried in different parts

of his kingdom for the sake of ensuring the fruitfulness of the earth. He is said to have been drowned at the age of foily through the breaking of the ice in spring.

What followed his death is thus related by the old Norse historian Snorri Sturluson :

" He had been the most prosperous (literally, blessed with abundance) of all kings. So greatly did men value him that when the news came

that he was dead and his body removed to Hringariki and

intended for burial there, the chief men from Raumariki and Westfold and Heithmork came and all requested that they

might take his body with them and bury it in their various

provinces ; they thought that it would bring abundance to those who obtained it. Eventually it was settled that

the body was distributed in four places. The head was laid in a barrow at Steinn in Hringariki, and each party took away

their own share and buried it. All these barrows are called Halfdan's barrows."² It should be remembered that this

Halfdan belonged to the family of the Ynglings, who

traced
 their descent from Frey, the
 great Scandinavian god of
 fertility.³ Frey himself is said
 to have reigned as king of
 Sweden at Upsala. The years
 of his reign were plenteous,
 and the people laid the
 plenty to his account So
 when he

¹ R. M. Dawkins,
 "The Modern
 Carnival in Thrace
 and the Cult of
Dicmysus" *Journal of
 Hellenic Studies*,
 xxvi. (1906) pp. 191-
 206. See further
*Spirits of tju Corn and
 of the Wild*, i.
 25 sqq.

² Snorri Sturluson,
Heimskringla,
Saga Halfdanar
Svarta, ch. 9. I
 have
 to thank Professor H.
 M. Chadwick
 for referring me to
 this passage and
 translating it for me.
 See also *Tjue*
Stories of the Kings of
Norway (Heims-
kringla} clone
 into English by W.
 Morris and E.
 Magnusson (London,
 1893-1905}, i. 86
 sq. Halfdan the
 Black was the father
 of Harold the
 Fair-haired, king of
 Norway (860-933
 A.D.). Professor
 Chadwick tells me
 that, though the
 tradition as to the

death and mutilation
 of Halfdan was
 not committed to
 writing for three
 hundred years, he
 sees no reason to
 doubt its truth. He
 also informs me
 that the word
 translated "abundance
 "

means literally "to
 produce of the
 season." "Plenteous
 years" is the
 rendering of Morris
 and Magnusson.

³ As to the descent
 of Halfdan and
 the Ynglings from
 Frey, see *Heims-*
kringla, done into
 English by W.
 Morris and E.
 Magnusson, i. 23-71
 (*The Saga Library*,
 vol. iii.). With
 regard to Frey, the
 god of fertility,
 both animal and
 vegetable, see E. H.
 Meyer, *Mythologie der*
Germanen
 (Strasburg, 1903), pp.
 366 sq. ; P.
 Hermann, *Nordische*
Mythologie (Leip-
 sic, 1903), pp. 206
 sqq.